



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

**FULL COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2009
4:00 – 6:00 PM
COMMISSION BOARDROOM**

MINUTES

Commissioners

Anne Ashmore-Hudson, Chair
Rhona Wolfe Freidman
Marvin Bowser
Susan Clampitt
Christopher Cowan
Lou Hill Davidson
Rebecca Fishman
Philippa Hughes
Rogelio A. Maxwell
Bernard Richardson
Michael R. Sonnenreich
Judith F. Terra
Ian J. Williams
Lavinia Wohlfarth

Staff

Gloria Nauden, Executive Director
Dolores Kendrick, Poet Laureate
Catherine Cleary, Dir. Grants & Leg. Affairs
Moshe Adams, Legislative & Grants Manager
Ebony Blanks, Program Coordinator
Victoria Joy Murray, Program Coordinator

I. Call to Order

The Chair, Dr. Anne Ashmore-Hudson, called the meeting to order at 4:05.

II. Approval of Minutes

The Chair asked the Commission to review the minutes from the executive committee meeting on July 23, 2009.

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Terra that the Commission approve the minutes as presented.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

III. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director, Gloria Nauden, invited the full staff into the meeting to exchange meaningful arts experiences with the full Commission by way of introduction. The staff and board enjoyed the experience of getting to know each other.

IV. Chair's Report

The Chair asked the new commissioners to introduce themselves. Commissioner Hughes made specific reference to the Pink Line Project and resources it offers to the DC arts community. The remaining commissioners, the Executive Director and the Poet Laureate, Dolores Kendrick, briefly introduced themselves to the new commissioners.

The Chair mentioned the success of the STIM10 and UPSTART panels that she convened. She added that the Adams Morgan public art project is tabled for the moment in response to recent community input.

The art forum is supported by the Art Salon and is an excellent opportunity to get to know the arts community in DC. The Chair commended the Arts Unplugged events for receiving favorable comments from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

The Chair also mentioned the Youth Orchestra of the Americas concert and the wonderful success that it was.

V. Poet Laureate's Report

The Poet Laureate mentioned the one-of-a-kind opportunity that the ceremony commemorating her tenth anniversary as the poet laureate was. She thanked the Executive Director for her support and Karen Baker, the event coordinator, for her hard work. She commended them and Carolyn Parker for their teamwork in making the experience so memorable. Commissioner Terra noted the Poet Laureate's influence as a teacher. Commissioner Bowser and Commissioner Clampitt stated how much they enjoyed the occasion and commented on the recognition of the Poet Laureate's work around the country.

VI. Arts Education Projects

The Vice Chair introduced Ava Spece as the panel representative for the Arts Education Projects program. Ms. Spece commended the other panelists for their diligent and perceptive review of the applications. Commissioner Friedman noted the difficult task that panel had in scoring the applications. Ms. Spece reviewed the policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

1. Instead of the 30 word limit, the project summary should be a very succinct description of what the project is going to do.
2. Applicants should be required to include lesson plans that have aligned assessments.
3. Applicants must use the official budget form. The panel recommends revising the form so that applicants must identify which of these expenses will be attributed to DCCAH.

4. DCCAH should establish how much of the grant may be allowed for administrative costs.
5. If the applicant has previously conducted the project and it has been evaluated by an outside consultant, the applicant should have to include a copy of the evaluation in the application.
6. Work samples should relate the project for which funding is sought and show work with young people (first time applicants exempted).
7. For school-based programs, applicants should reference DC standards rather than national standards.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Davidson and seconded by Commissioner Friedman that the Commissioners approve the \$850,000 in funding recommendations as presented.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

VII. Folk and Traditional Arts

Ebony Blanks, Arts Program Coordinator, introduced the panel representative, Alex Chi. Mr. Chi reviewed the panel recommendations and highly recommended the panel's funding decisions. He then reviewed the policy recommendations from the panel.

Policy Recommendations

1. The panel recommends that the social security number should be blanked out on application forms.
2. The panel would like DCCAH to assemble a list of community spaces, churches, theater spaces for free or low rates that artist can use.
3. DCCAH should recommend to applicants that they have a secured venue in place or at least a specific venue in mind for projects to happen when applying.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Terra and seconded by Commissioner Friedman that the Commissioners approve the \$3,000 in funding recommendations as presented.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

VIII. City Arts Projects

Director of Grants and Legislative Affairs, Catherine Cleary, introduced Tish Carter, the panel representative. Ms. Carter reviewed the panel's recommendations for funding. She then reviewed the panel's policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

1. The panel recommends mandating specific language in the applications of applicants who are proposing new projects that describes the methods they will use to develop the new project, including: letters of support and agreement, résumés of new/ancillary project personnel.
2. If the application calls for the distribution of free tickets, the applicant must provide evidence that free tickets have been used in the past and comment on their tracking method (free tickets are pink, paid tickets are white) and they must address other barriers.
3. Awards shows should be made eligible for funding under Festivals DC.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Wohlfarth that the Commission approve the \$565,000 in funding recommendations as presented.

Motion Carried

*Unanimous

IX. Festivals DC

The Director of Grants and Legislative Affairs introduced Janet Butler Berry, the panel representative. She reviewed the panel recommendations for funding and commended the panel for their diligent work. The panel representative then reviewed the panel's policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

1. The applicant should state the name of the festival and dates explicitly in the application.
2. The Commission should find a way to help applicant's itemize their budgets better.
3. For work samples, applicants should list the participating artists or artists applicants have worked with in the past to help the panelists evaluate artistic merit.
4. Festivals should contain multiple arts components, perhaps focusing on the actual presenters of the activities—the festival should have a clear artistic intention.

Discussion

The Executive Director asked for a specific example of applications that stood out and specifically asked for descriptions of the John F. Kennedy Center and WVSA Arts projects. The Chair asked for details about the festival presented by Building Bridges Across the River.

Commissioner Davidson asked about Cultural Tourism DC and their programming. She followed up by asking if the applicants are required to report on the festival attendance.

The Commission commented on the panel representative's enthusiasm surrounding the panel review. Commissioner Friedman asked if Commissioners Sonnenreich and Fishman concurred with the panel's recommendations given that some recipients have outside resources for their events as opposed to others who have less. Commissioner Davidson recommended designing a methodology to determine funding for less financially secure organizations. Commissioner Sonnenreich explained that many large organizations need funding for their festivals as much as smaller organizations.

The Chair recommended creating separate cohorts to include larger and smaller organizations for festivals. Commissioner Sonnenreich added the amount of funding allocated for the program was much smaller than that for many of the other programs. Commissioner Davidson noted that some festivals could be combined to avoid the duplication of efforts. Commissioner Bowser recommended keeping the panel process as "clean" as possible and facilitating partnerships between organizations doing similar projects. Commissioner Clampitt noted the competition between larger organizations and smaller organizations and encouraged developing the smaller groups.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Davidson and seconded by Commissioner Wohlfarth that the \$230,000 in funding recommendations be approved as recommended.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

A discussion on the maximum number of grants that an applicant can receive followed. Commissioner Williams asked if there was a way to ensure that there is a fair geographic distribution of funds and the evaluation criteria were explained.

Commissioner Fishman asked if it is possible for the commissioners to change the panel process policy and the Chair replied that the policy meeting in either November or December would be the appropriate time to discuss suggestions of that nature. The Chair recommended possibly establishing a committee to review the process. Commissioner Sonnenreich reiterated the need to be cognizant of the applicant pool (size and quality) when budgeting funds internally. The Chair reminded the Commission of their potential role of consolidating projects. Commissioner Richardson recommended creating incentives for collaborations.

Commissioner Fishman moved that a committee be established to review the panel process. Commissioner Friedman seconded the motion.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

The Chair appointed Commissioner Fishman as the chair of the review committee.

X. Artist Fellowship – Performing Arts

The Legislative and Grants Manager, Moshe Adams, introduced Sandra Sampayo, the panel representative. She presented the funding and policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

1. The panel would like the Commission to fund a “Living Legend Award”
2. Inter-disciplinary artists who provide a literary work sample and apply for the Artist Fellowship Program – Performing Arts be required to provide specific sections of their work for the panel to review.
3. Individuals applying as a director include a concept statement with visual representations or a section from a prompt book.

Discussion

Ms. Sampayo pointed out that it was difficult to award funding with such a small budget. In discussing the “Living Legends” recommendation, she highlighted the breathtaking audition of Isacah James Savage from South East.

Commissioner Maxwell added that the applicants were very talented and the panelists were of a high caliber. Mr. Adams added that 25 of the applicants auditioned rather than submitting a work sample.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Friedman that the panel’s \$70,000 in funding recommendations be approved as presented.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

XI. UPSTART Program

The Arts Program Coordinator, Victoria Murray, introduced Ann Norton, the panel representative. She presented the panel’s funding recommendations, noting the division between Cohort A and Cohort B. Ms. Norton added that the panel declared one applicant ineligible, based on their activities.

Discussion

Commissioner Cowan asked the Arts Program Coordinator to explain the goals of the UPSTART program and she provided an overview of the grant, including the differences between Cohort A and Cohort B.

The Chair commented that the UPSTART consultants should be evaluated by the participants. Ms. Norton replied that that would be valuable and expanded on the value she found in her experience as a past UPSTART participant. The Chair added that this issue should be addressed at the upcoming policy meeting. It is crucial that the consultant bring added value to the experience, rather than any barriers. The program should be empowering, rather than stifling. The Executive Director then explained the payment process for the consultants. Commissioner Fishman asked who the consultants are and the Director of Grants and Legislative Affairs replied. Commissioner Friedman requested that an evaluation of the consultants by the FY 2009 UPSTART participants be provided at the next meeting.

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Maxwell that the panel's recommendations be approved as presented.

*Motion Carried

*Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 6:04.